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REPORT OF A CENSUS OF CALIFORNIA SEA LIONS, *Zalophus californianus*, ON GUADALUPE ISLAND AND ADJACENT ISLETS

By

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National Marine Fisheries Service
2570 Dole Street
Honolulu, Hawaii

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT LJ-91-17C

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REPORT OF A CENSUS OF CALIFORNIA SEA LIONS,
Zalophus californianus, ON GUADALUPE ISLAND AND ADJACENT ISLETS

by

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Final Report
to

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Southwest Fisheries Science Center
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INTRODUCTION

During the period 9-27 July 1990, research continued on a study of the ecology of the Guadalupe fur seal on Guadalupe Island, Mexico (Project Ecología del lobo fino de Guadalupe, Arctocephalus townsendi Merriam 1897). This larger project consists of 3 sub-projects: the territorial behavior of male Guadalupe fur seals (Valdez 1988); maternal behavior of the Guadalupe fur seal (Vomend 1988), and population dynamics of the Guadalupe fur seal (Torres 1988). All these projects are part of a program of study called "Biology of the marine mammals of the Mexican Pacific" (Aguayo 1982).

In 1990, a census of California sea lions (Zalophus californianus) was also carried out at the same time as the Guadalupe fur seal census. This report presents the results of the California sea lion survey.

METHODS

The California sea lion census was carried out using a direct count method, classifying the animals in the following categories: adult males, subadult males, females, juveniles, pups, and unclassified. Where the island topography allowed, the census was made on foot along the base of the cliffs. In other places the counts were made from a boat (Zodiac) at a distance of 10m from the shore. A part of the west coast was censused from a ship, with observations being aided by the use of 10x50 binoculars.

RESULTS

The census area is shown in Figure 1, with a dotted line indicating areas censused by foot, a continuous line indicating areas censused by Zodiac, and a dot-dashed line indicating areas censused from the ship. The census data are summarized in Table 1 including census date, census time, zone censused, the number of sea lions found in each of the above categories, and additional comments. A total of 92 California sea lions were counted, including 11 adult males, 1 subadult male, 54 females, 9 juveniles, 9 pups, and 8 unclassified animals.

Due to meteorological conditions (hurricane Fausto and tropical storm Diana), we could only census the east coast, the southern islets, and a part of the west coast. We have, however, anecdotal reports of fishermen that no California sea lions and no fur seals are found on the western shore of Guadalupe Island. The same fishermen report that elephant seals (Mirounga angustirostris) are present along the west coast in December. There was also a zone in the northern part of the island that could not be censused due to strong marine currents (Figure 1).

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Table 1. California sea lion censuses carried out on Guadalupe Island, Baja California, Mexico and adjacent islets, 1990. Sea lions were classified as adult males, subadult males, adult females, juveniles, pups, and unclassified animals.

Date	Time	Region	AM	Numbers Seen			P	U	Observation Type
				SM	AF	J			
July 10	0830	East coast of Guadalupe Island. Between Pilot Rock and South Barracks Beach				1			On Land (rocks)
July 13	0850	Islet "El Zapato"	11	1	54	7	9	8	On Land
July 27	1700	Between El Morro and Sealer Station Ruins				1			In Water
TOTALS			11	1	54	9	9	8	

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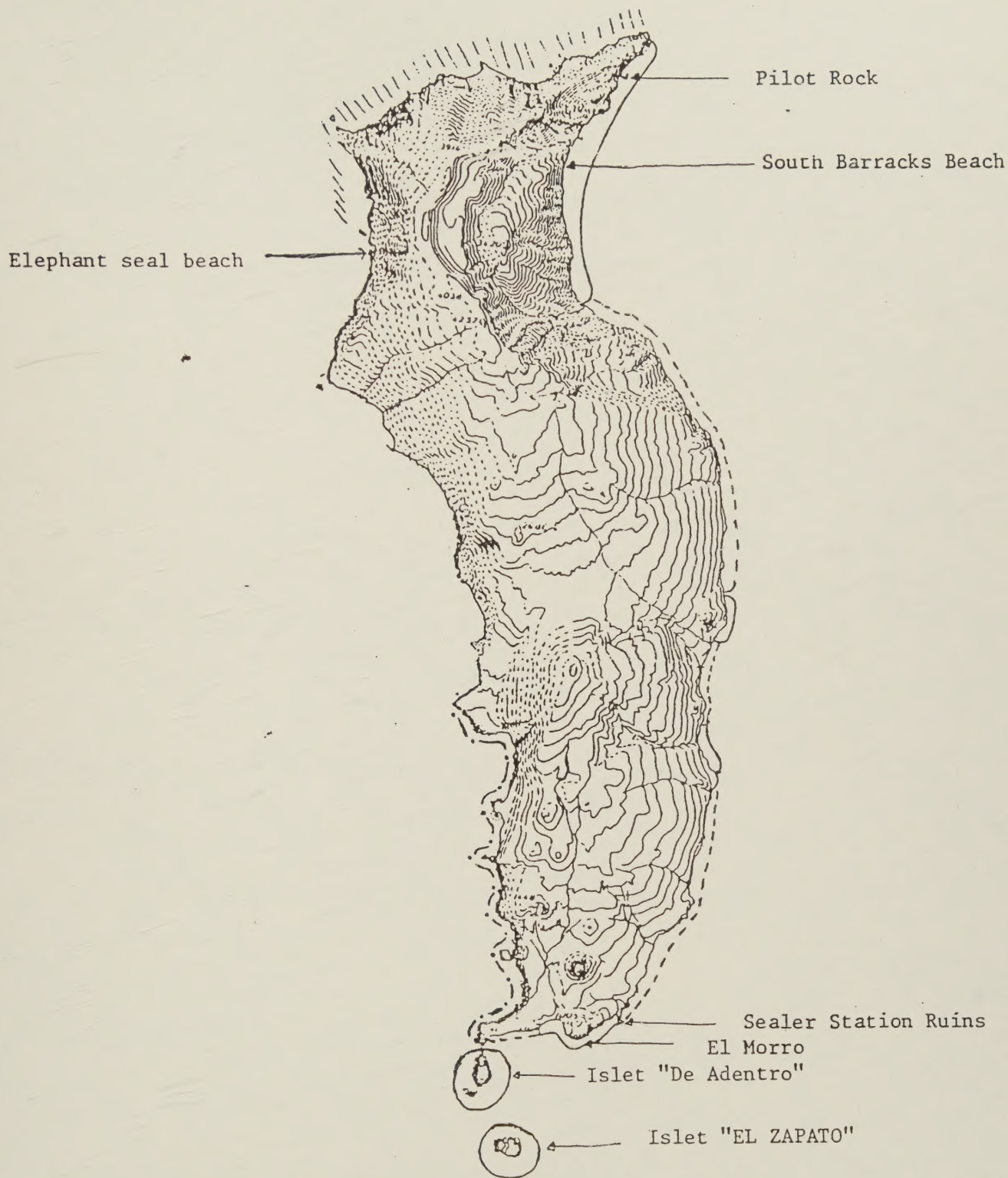


FIGURE 1. Map of Guadalupe Island and adjacent islets. (Fleischer, 1978)

